



RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

NOTE: This directive is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or case in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Series 9	Number 4	Effective Date 07/09/09	Review Date 2012
Subject RESPONSE TO ALARMS			☐ New Order ☒ Replaces G.O. 9-4, (01/07/05)
References Richmond City Codes <i>34-68a; 34-69 and 34-69 Appendix A</i> Virginia State Code <i>§18.2-212</i> Richmond Police Department Operational Plan-Commercial Robberies, Citywide Response and TAC Alarms CALEA 81.2.13			
 _____ Chief of Police or Designee		07/09/09 _____ Date	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Order is to outline a plan to be followed for responding to and handling *security* alarms.

II. POLICY

It is essential that police officers understand their role and responsibilities when responding to alarms. Officers shall proceed with extreme caution when answering any type of alarm call. Officers shall also be aware that alarms can be activated in a number of ways. The nature of the alarm sometimes determines the response. Officers shall follow the procedures set forth in this policy to enhance arrest possibilities of suspects and observe proper precautions for the safety of officers, employees and bystanders.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this general order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. FALSE ALARM – any alarm signal communicated to the *Division of Emergency Communications* (DEC) which is not in response to an actual or threatened hazard.

1. False alarms shall include negligently or accidentally activated signals; signals which are activated as the result of faulty, malfunctioning or improperly installed or maintained equipment; and signals which are purposefully activated to summon police and/or fire personnel in non-emergency situations.
 2. False alarms shall not include signals which are activated by unusually severe weather conditions or other causes which are identified and determined, after evaluation by DEC, Chief of Fire or the Chief of Police, as applicable, to be beyond the control of the owner or the user of an alarm system.
- B. **DELIBERATE FALSE ALARMS** – Any person who intentionally or deliberately and without just cause activates an alarm system in a non-emergency situation and by such action causes an emergency response to be made by the Police Department, Fire and Emergency Services Departments, either or both, shall be deemed guilty of a Class I Misdemeanor. (Richmond City Code §34-68a)
- C. **TACTICAL (TAC) ALARM** – *An activated alarm system treated as an in-progress robbery requiring the immediate deployment of police personnel and a strategic perimeter response.*

V. PROCEDURE

A. DEC Responsibilities for Alarms:

1. Upon receipt of an alarm, *by direct interface with the CAD system or the 911 phone system*, DEC shall dispatch **Police, Fire or EMS** officers to respond according to the priority appropriate to the circumstances and nature of the alarm. If the alarm company advises that they have confirmed with the protected premises that a crime has occurred, the Communications Officer shall treat the event as a robbery or burglary and assign a minimum of two patrol units and a field supervisor shall be notified.
2. When a bank robbery alarm is received, DEC will simulcast the call on ***all police channels***. All police units, responding to the alarm, will advise the Communications Officer of their response and from what location they are responding.
3. If the robbery ***or burglary*** notification is received by telephone, DEC shall, if possible, obtain a complete description of the suspect(s) along with as much additional information as possible including whether the suspect(s) is at the scene, his/her direction and mode of travel if he/she has left the scene, and a complete description of any vehicle involved. ***In the case of a burglary, the resident or business representative shall be instructed to meet the officers outside unless other circumstances prevent this measure.***

NOTE: During “in-progress” incidents, DEC personnel shall remain on the line with the resident or business representative until verification of Richmond Police Officers on the scene is received.

4. If the robbery or burglary notification is made by alarm, DEC SHALL NOT attempt to contact the ***home or business*** in order to determine the validity of the

alarm until the police officers have given notice that they are in position at the establishment. ***Once officers are on-scene (10-23), DEC shall contact the home or business for verification if valid contact numbers are available.***

5. If DEC is subsequently notified that the alarm is false, ***the Communications Officer will change it to a non-emergency (code 2) response*** and the responding units will be notified ***that one unit is to respond for verification.***

B. Initial Police Response to Alarms:

1. When an alarm signal is received, two units (one closest to the scene and a backup) shall be dispatched and shall respond immediately to the alarm location. If available, other units in the vicinity will proceed to the location and standby while maintaining radio silence, unless another emergency exists. Any responding units shall be alert for suspicious activity.
2. When using emergency equipment officers shall follow all applicable Department procedures and respond sensibly and cautiously. Audible alarms, however, do not justify an emergency response. Officers shall respond to audible alarms according to posted speed limits and traffic control devices.
3. The first police unit to arrive at the alarm scene shall approach the premises cautiously, being observant for possible getaway cars, lookouts or other suspicious signs. After this initial assessment, the first unit on the scene shall immediately advise other units. Before arrival, responding units shall, by ***first officer on the scene or supervisor determination***, know which unit will cover the front and which will cover the rear. The first unit shall assume a position to cover the entrance without being seen from inside the facility, unless it has been determined that the suspects have already fled the scene. Any suspects leaving the building should not be able to see the police vehicles.
4. The second police unit to arrive at the scene shall assume a position that covers the second most likely exit without being seen from inside the facility, unless it has been determined that suspects have already fled the scene.
5. If a robbery has been committed, the officer shall identify witnesses, ensure that injured people receive medical attention, protect the crime scene, obtain necessary information for on-the-lookout broadcasts ***and notify DEC as soon as possible.***
6. If detectives or plainclothes officers respond to the alarm, they should have visible some type of identification that signifies them as police ***officials and utilize universal Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) recognition, whenever possible.***

C. Procedures upon Determination that a Robbery or Burglary has Occurred:

1. Upon arrival, if the officers confirm that a robbery or burglary has occurred, they ***shall secure the scene, protect all evidence, treat any injured individuals and collect appropriate information for the Incident Based Report (IBR)*** with the appropriate incident classification.

2. Once it has been determined that a robbery *or burglary* has occurred, the first officer responding will obtain enough information for a preliminary all-unit broadcast to be sent out. This broadcast should include a brief physical description of the suspect(s), direction of travel and weapons used. A more detailed broadcast should be given after witnesses have been located and more thoroughly interviewed.
3. AFTER A ROBBERY **OR BURGLARY** HAS OCCURRED, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT WILL AFFECT THE APPREHENSION OF THE SUSPECT(S) IS THE SPEED IN WHICH THE PRELIMINARY ALL-UNIT BROADCAST IS SENT OUT. AN OFFICER SHALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO IMMEDIATELY HAVE THE ALL-UNIT BROADCAST SENT OUT AFTER ARRIVING AT THE SCENE.
4. In the case of a verified alarm, the on-duty supervisor shall direct other patrol units to monitor possible escape routes, assume a perimeter around the premises (if possible) or resume other duties.

D. Procedures in case of Alarms *at Banks*:

1. In an effort to assist the Department in its response to bank alarms, Richmond area banks have developed the following cooperative procedure in instances of *bank* alarms:
 - a) A representative of the bank, with a Bank Staff ID Card prominently displayed on his/her lapel, will position him/herself in front of the bank where he/she may be clearly seen and easily identified by the responding police units.
 - b) The bank representative will advise the first officer arriving on the scene as to the status of the alarm. If a robbery has occurred, the representative will give the officer a brief description of the suspect(s), direction of travel and weapons used. He/she will advise if medical help is needed.
2. If no bank employee approaches in a reasonable time, officers shall consider the alarm to be a robbery in progress. In this event, the on-duty supervisor may consider the possibility of hostage taking within the business and may request a tactical unit.
3. If the on-scene *police* supervisor determines that the alarm is false, he/she shall not rely solely on the bank official saying so, but must enter the bank with the bank officer to verify the situation and so notify DEC.
4. In verifying that an alarm is false, the interior of the bank must be inspected for any unusual activity. After verifying that the alarm is false, the first officer on the scene will cancel all other units responding.
5. In situations of false alarms, the first responding officer shall append to the call the following information on the MDC: the name of the bank official that declared the alarm "false" and whether a bank representative met the officers outside.

NOTE: This procedure has been developed as a joint effort between the Richmond Police Department and Richmond area banks. It is important that the details of this procedure be handled as confidential information, and be released to no one except authorized law enforcement officials. It is the Department's primary responsibility to ensure the safety of the officers responding to the alarm, employees and other citizens, and through the proper use of this procedure; it is felt that the possibilities for an apprehension will be greatly increased.

E. Police Response to ***Business and Residential*** Alarms:

1. ***Upon receipt of the alarm notification, if the location is secure or the business is closed, the Warrant and Information Services Unit personnel shall, at the request of the responding officer, immediately notify the alarm company.***

NOTE: If the residence is secure upon inspection by the officer, no key holder response is required.

2. ***Officers shall enter a residence only after a key holder arrives, should the key holder arrive in a timely fashion.***
3. If officers discover physical signs of a break-in, they shall assume that a suspect or suspects may be inside the business ***or residence***. The officers shall also consider the possibility that hostages may have been taken. If appropriate, the officers shall summon a Canine Unit. In any event, the officers shall conduct a thorough search of the premises.
4. ***If the officer(s) determines the premise is secure and no break-in or attempt has occurred, he/she will complete an Alarm Notice (PD-158) and attach it to the entry doorknob or other conspicuous location on the premises.***
5. ***For each false alarm, an Alarm Notice will be left at the premises. The alarm notice advises the owner and/or occupant that the alarm was activated and the premise was checked. In many cases, this will be the only way to advise the owner/occupant that the alarm was activated while they were away.***

NOTE: Excessive false alarms at banks, other businesses or residences shall be handled in accordance with Richmond City Code § 34-69 and § 34-69 Appendix A.

F. ***TAC Alarm Response:***

Officers, DEC and other RPD personnel shall refer to the Department's July 5, 2007 "Commercial Robberies, Citywide Response and TAC Alarm Operation Plan," located at X:\Daily Briefings\TAC Alarm Operational Procedures, for all procedures. Key points to be aware of are as follows:

1. ***TAC Alarms are simulcast on all DEC service channels;***
2. ***A minimum of two units and a field supervisor shall be assigned;***
3. ***Perimeters shall be established and maintained until the scene is rendered safe;***

4. *The first supervisor on scene shall assume command and control of the incident; and,*
5. *TAC Alarms are silent and the suspect(s) will not have knowledge that an alarm has been activated.*

VI. **ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

A. *Responding Officer(s) shall:*

1. *Respond immediately to alarm location when dispatched;*
2. *Assess the scene and advise other units;*
3. *Follow all applicable department procedures;*
4. *In cases of robbery:*
 - a. *Protect scene;*
 - b. *Obtain and submit on-the-lookout information without delay;*
 - c. *Thoroughly inspect business interior after owner's arrival;*
 - d. *Summon Canine Unit when feasible; and,*
 - e. *Complete an IBR.*
5. *Complete a PD-158 for each false alarm and attach it conspicuously on the premises..*

B. *Other Responding Units shall:*

1. *Standby, maintain radio silence and be alert for suspicious activity;*
2. *Follow all applicable department procedures in response to alarm dispatch; and,*
3. *If dispatched for a TAC Alarm, follow departmental procedures specific to the TAC Alarm response as stated in this directive.*

C. *On-duty Field Supervisor shall:*

1. *Assume command and control of incidents by directing patrol unit(s);*
2. *Request Tactical Unit, when applicable; and,*
3. *Verify false alarm by inspecting interior and notifying DEC.*

D. *Plainclothes Officer or Detective shall:*

1. *If responding, have visible means of police identification; and,*

2. *Utilize LEO identification procedures, whenever possible.*

E. *Warrant and Information Services Unit shall:*

At the request of the responding officer, immediately notify the alarm company.

F. *DEC shall:*

1. *Evaluate alarm calls and dispatch officers and responding units in accordance with established departmental procedures;*
2. *Simulcast calls if determined to be a bank robbery or TAC alarm;*
3. *Obtain and relay suspect information; and,*
4. *Enter appropriate codes and dispatch signals in accordance to event type.*

VII. **FORMS**

A. *PD-158, Alarm Notice*

B. *IBR*

C. *Supplemental IBR forms, if applicable.*